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RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 3352
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 7699
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 6060
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2553
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 0749
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RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE 1907
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NEW DELHI 000163

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/08/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [ELTN](#) [ECIN](#) [ETRD](#) [IN](#) [PK](#)
SUBJECT: INDO-PAK WALTZ SLOWS: BACKWARD ON RHETORIC,
FORWARD ON RAILS, SIDEWAYS ON SUMMIT

REF: A. 05 NEW DELHI 9771
[1](#)B. 05 NEW DELHI 9766

Classified By: DCM Robert Blake, Jr. for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In a January 9 conversation with the DCM (other topics reported Septel), Deputy NSA Vijay Nambiar underlined that much of the current friction between India and Pakistan stems from ongoing Pakistan-sponsored terrorism against India, including the spectacular Diwali bombings and the attack by gunmen on the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore. The GOI remains frustrated at Musharraf's predilection for floating unrealistic diplomatic trial balloons, especially regarding Kashmir. In this regard, the MEA's recent criticism of Islamabad's counter-terrorism operations in Balochistan and the lack of democracy in Gilgit and Baltistan is "a taste of their own medicine." Nambiar downplayed PM Singh's decision not to go to Pakistan for the Indo-Pak cricket match, which does not, he stressed, rule out a visit later in the year. Meanwhile, a breakthrough in talks to revive the Munnabao-Khokhrapar rail link between Rajasthan and Sindh -- which had been dormant for 40 years -- will likely lead to their resumption next month, reinforcing that in Delhi-Islamabad affairs, every step backward is accompanied by one forward and one or two to the side. Nevertheless, the constant terror against India is depleting the GOI's goodwill toward Pakistan. End Summary.

Can't Separate Diplomacy from Cross-Border Terrorism

[1](#)2. (C) DCM opened by asking whether the MEA's quick

dismissal of Musharraf's invitation for the PM to visit Pakistan for one game of the cricket series was a missed opportunity; Nambiar said it was a considered GOI decision. According to Nambiar, much of the perceived friction in current India-Pakistan relations stems from the spectacular terrorist attacks following the October 8 Kashmir earthquake.

Nambiar underlined that Indo-Pak atmospherics changed dramatically after the Diwali and Bangalore terrorist attacks -- the GOI would "send the wrong message" if it acted as though the dialogue remains untouched by these attacks. Nambiar's sentiment is in line with MEA Spokesman Navtej Sarna's January 7 remark reminding Musharraf of his January 2004 promise not to permit terrorists who target India to use territory under Pakistan's control.

GOI Frustrated at Musharraf's Media Diplomacy

13. (C) Nambiar reported that Musharraf's latest unrealistic Kashmir volley -- calling for India to demilitarize Srinagar, Kupwara and Baramullah, and to enhance self-governance for Kashmir -- "upped the ante" and "took Kashmir to a boil" within the GOI. "Demilitarization is out of the question, self-governance is an internal discussion ... we have our own momentum, we will not adhere to his momentum" on Kashmir, Nambiar continued. National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) Additional Secretary SD Pradhan underscored that "we need to make the conversation bilateral, it cannot happen through the media," and that any demilitarization in J&K would have to follow an improvement in security (read terrorism), which echoed the MEA's January 7 reply to

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Musharraf's overture. Nambiar also noted that Musharraf's repeated publicly floating diplomatic brainstorms invites shelling from the UPA's critics and makes the proposals that much harder for the government to debate, whether or not their substance is acceptable.

14. (C) On Musharraf's call for self-governance, Nambiar observed that the J&K state government was freely elected, fully democratic, and fully representative. He pointed to the successful 2004 elections and the credibility of Mufti Mohammad's government as examples. Citing the special status the Indian Constitution grants to J&K under Article 370, Nambiar emphasized that "autonomy is not new to J&K, if anything it's the opposite." The MEA on January 7 also pointed out that, in contrast to J&K, "there had been no popular elections in Gilgit and Baltistan (in Pakistan's Northern Areas)."

MEA Balochistan Remarks "A Taste of Their Own Medicine"

15. (C) In the above vein, Nambiar and Pradhan characterized the MEA Spokesman's December 27 comments that India was "watching with concern the spiraling violence in Balochistan and hopes that the Pakistan government will exercise restraint" (Ref B) as offering Islamabad "a taste of their own medicine" for years of official remarks on the human rights situation in J&K.

Nambiar Downplays Mirwaiz Pakistan Trip

16. (C) Nambiar outlined that several factors make Hurriyat leader Mirwaiz Umar Farooq's current Pakistan visit lackluster from Delhi's perspective. His calls for demilitarization and self-governance are unrealistic and vague, respectively, well worn, and preempted by Musharraf. The subjects are also "not part of the Indian discourse" and are therefore unlikely to generate much interest in India. Nambiar further noted that other influential separatists, such as Yasin Malik and Shabir Shah, remain outside the Hurriyat (and therefore outside Mirwaiz's orbit). Pradhan dismissed Mirwaiz as "unable to make decisions on his own."

(Translation: "He's a Pakistani pawn.")

PM Singh Doesn't Play Cricket (Diplomacy)

¶7. (C) Nambiar downplayed PM Singh's decision not to attend a cricket match in Pakistan, remarking that "cricket diplomacy is not our baby." The MEA statement on Musharraf's recent invitation to Pakistan merely noted that the PM does not plan to attend any of the winter-spring 2006 Indo-Pak cricket matches; it leaves open the question of following up on Musharraf's April 2005 invite to the PM.

Train Back on Track, Bus Stats Released

¶8. (U) On a more positive note, the January 6 joint Indo-Pak statement on the Munnabao-Khokhrapar train -- to be called "The Thar Express" after the desert it will traverse -- announced that service would begin on February 1. To bridge

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the impasse on how to handle border crossings (Ref A), each side will take turns running the train service. For the first six months, the Pakistan train will run to the station at Munnabao, and for the next six months the Indian train will travel as far as the Khokhrapar station, with each making a customs-and-security stop at the border. An Indian technical team is to travel to Pakistan later in January to sign the draft agreement that was discussed in Delhi on January 5-6.

¶9. (U) According to Indian government figures, the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus brought 355 Indian nationals to Pakistani Kashmir and 374 Pakistani nationals to J&K between April and December 2005.

Back-Channel Taking a Back Seat

¶10. (C) To the DCM's query on the SK Lambah-Tariq Aziz back-channel, Nambiar replied that to his knowledge there have been no recent meetings, and the only telephone conversation of which he was aware related to the Balochistan imbroglio.

Comment: The Dance Slows

¶11. (C) Criticisms by the normally soft-spoken D/NSA cannot be overstated -- although the GOI knows by now that Musharraf likes to test his ideas out in public, that approach not only does not work in Delhi, it dooms most proposals upon arrival regardless of whether the substance could be considered acceptable even for debate. The PM controls when (or whether) he takes up Musharraf's offer to host him, subject to a calendar that is rapidly filling with state visits to India by, among others, Australia, China, France, and the US, although a summit in 2006 remains more likely than not. The breakthrough on the Munnabao-Khokhrapar rail link, moreover, demonstrates that Delhi is willing to grit its teeth to expand confidence-building measures (especially those that facilitate free trade) even while heating up its rhetoric and pouring cold water on Islamabad's perceived desire for a spring summit. What's going on here is that Delhi is sending warning signs that continued terrorism is depleting Pakistan's reserve of goodwill in the GOI.

¶12. (U) Visit New Delhi's Classified Website:
(<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/sa/newdelhi/>)
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